DARK HORSE COMICS
DANGER UNLIMITED 4
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LEGEND
DANGER
UNLIMITED
g.cody '94
PLUS: THE TORCH of LIBERTY

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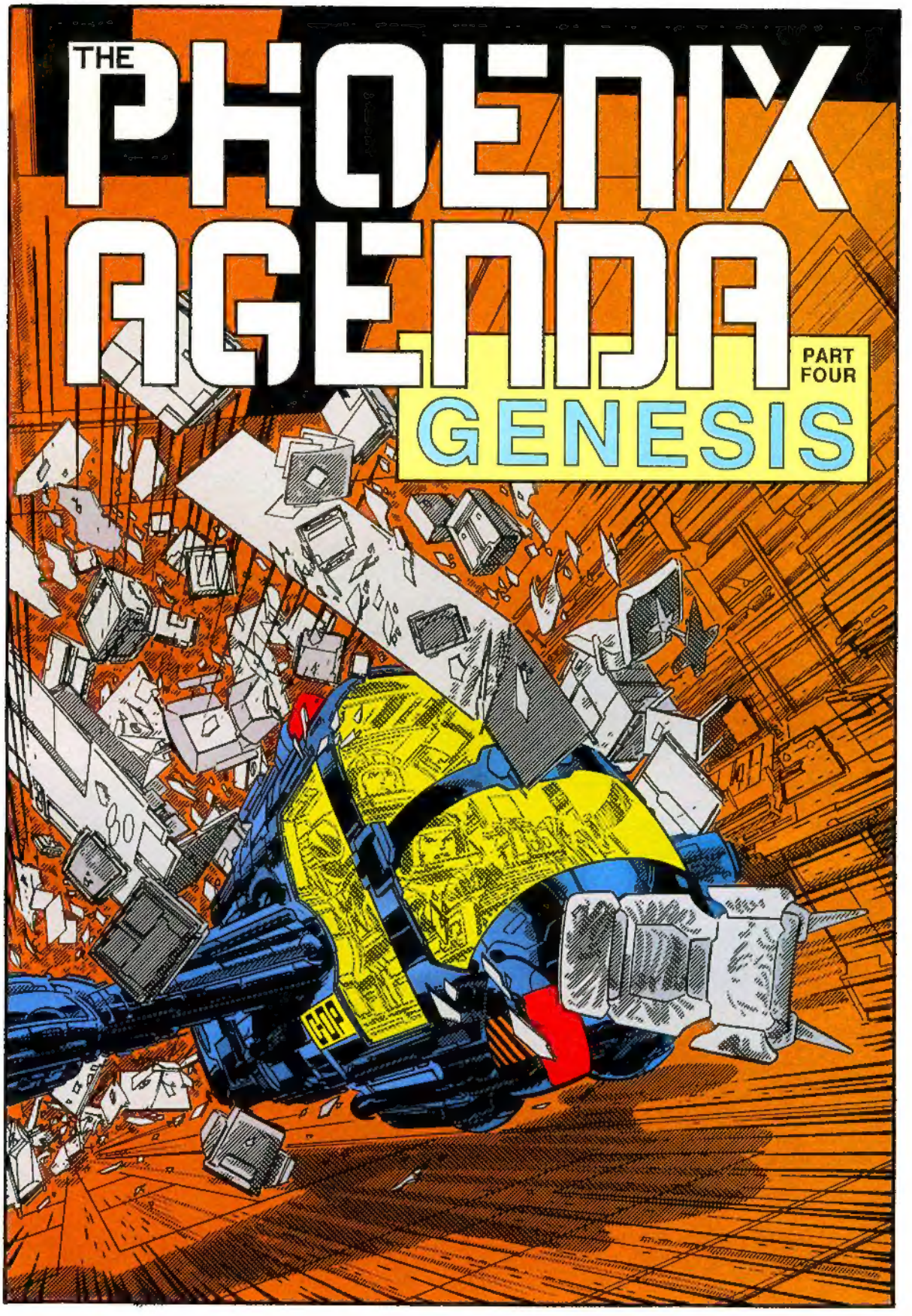
THE
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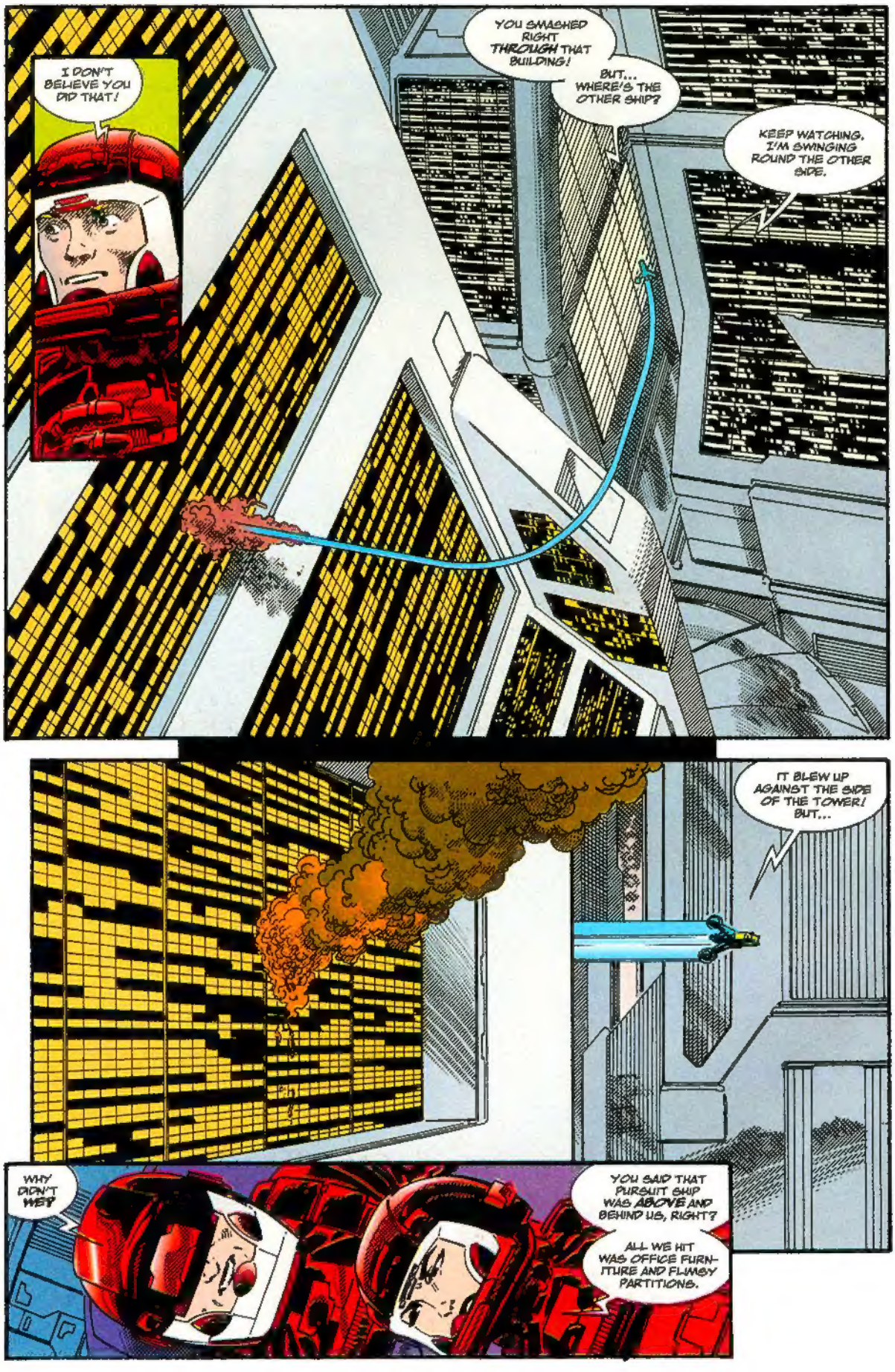
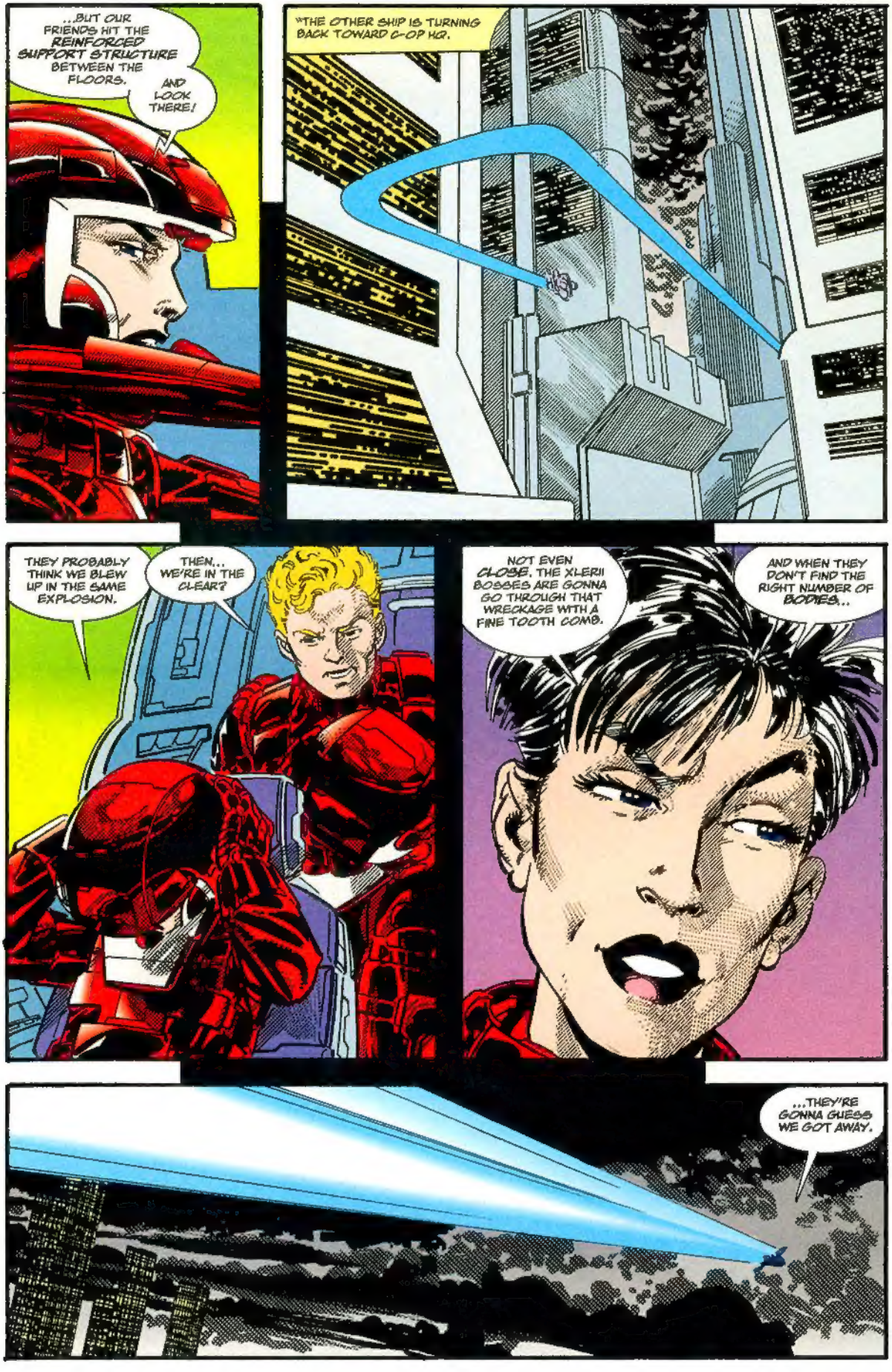
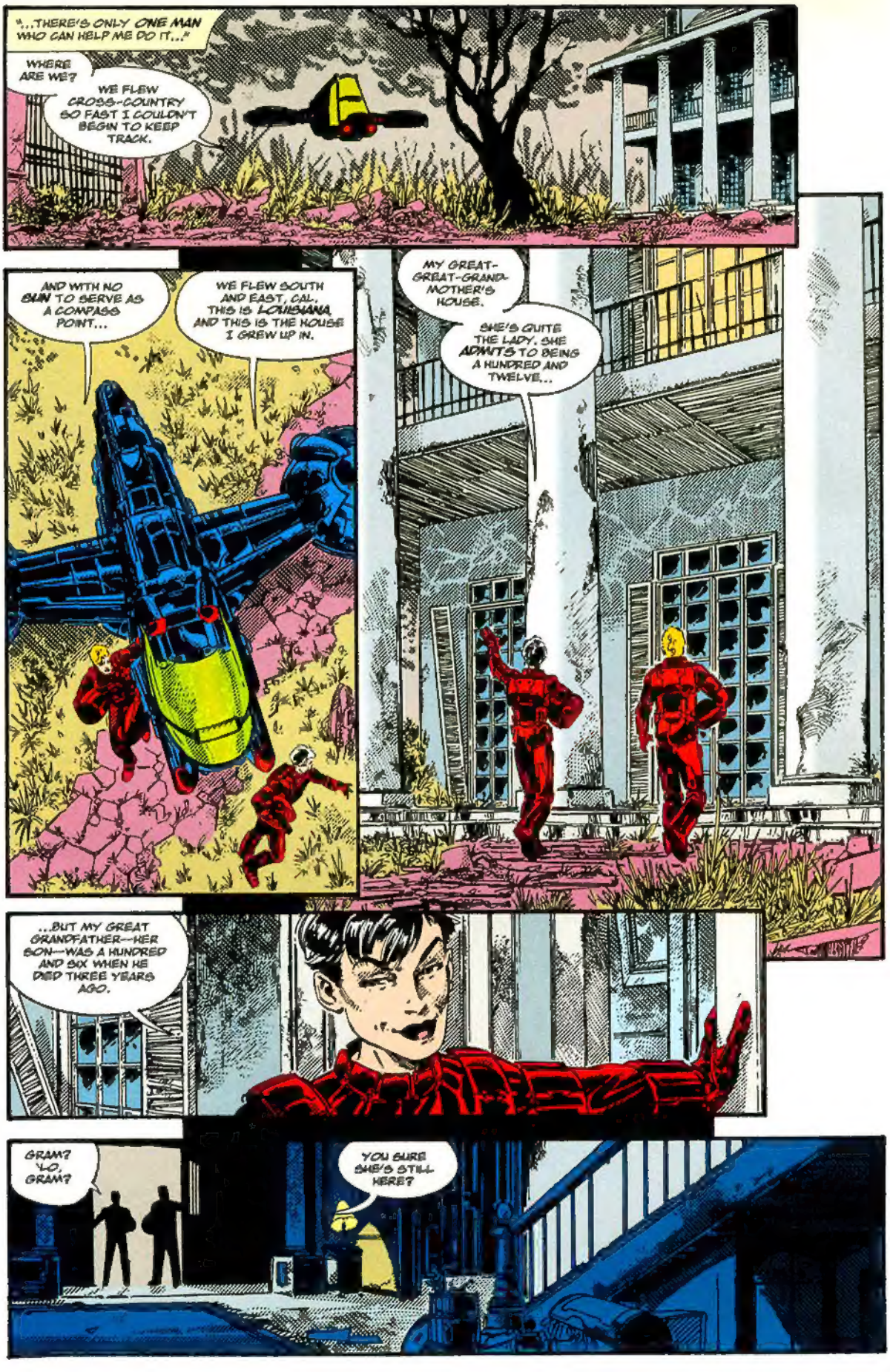

I DON'T BELIEVE YOU DID THAT!
YOU SMASHED RIGHT THROUGH THAT BUILDING!
BUT... WHERE'S THE OTHER SHIP?
KEEP WATCHING, I'M SWINGING ROUND THE OTHER SIDE.
IT BLEW UP AGAINST THE SIDE OF THE TOWER! BUT...
WHY DIDN'T WE?
YOU SAID THAT PURSUIT SHIP WAS ABOVE AND BEHIND US, RIGHT?
ALL WE HIT WAS OFFICE FURNITURE AND FLIMSY PARTITIONS.

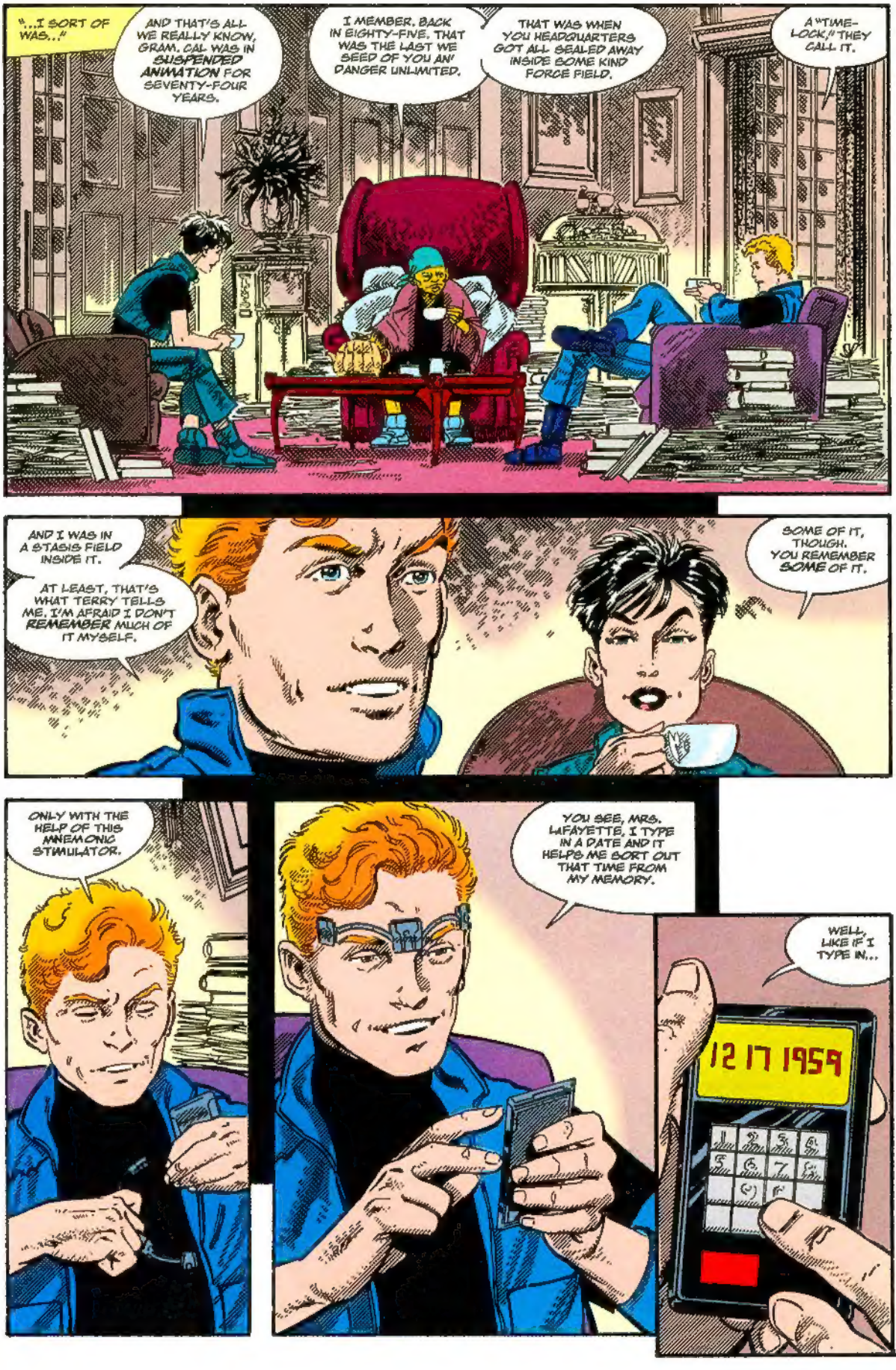

...BUT OUR FRIENDS HIT THE REINFORCED SUPPORT STRUCTURE BETWEEN THE FLOORS.
AND LOOK THERE!
*THE OTHER SHIP IS TURNING BACK TOWARD C-OP HQ.
THEY PROBABLY THINK WE BLEW UP IN THE SAME EXPLOSION.
THEN... WE'RE IN THE CLEAR?
NOT EVEN CLOSE. THE XLERII BOSSES ARE GONNA GO THROUGH THAT WRECKAGE WITH A FINE TOOTH COMB.
AND WHEN THEY DON'T FIND THE RIGHT NUMBER OF BODIES...
...THEY'RE GONNA GUESS WE GOT AWAY.

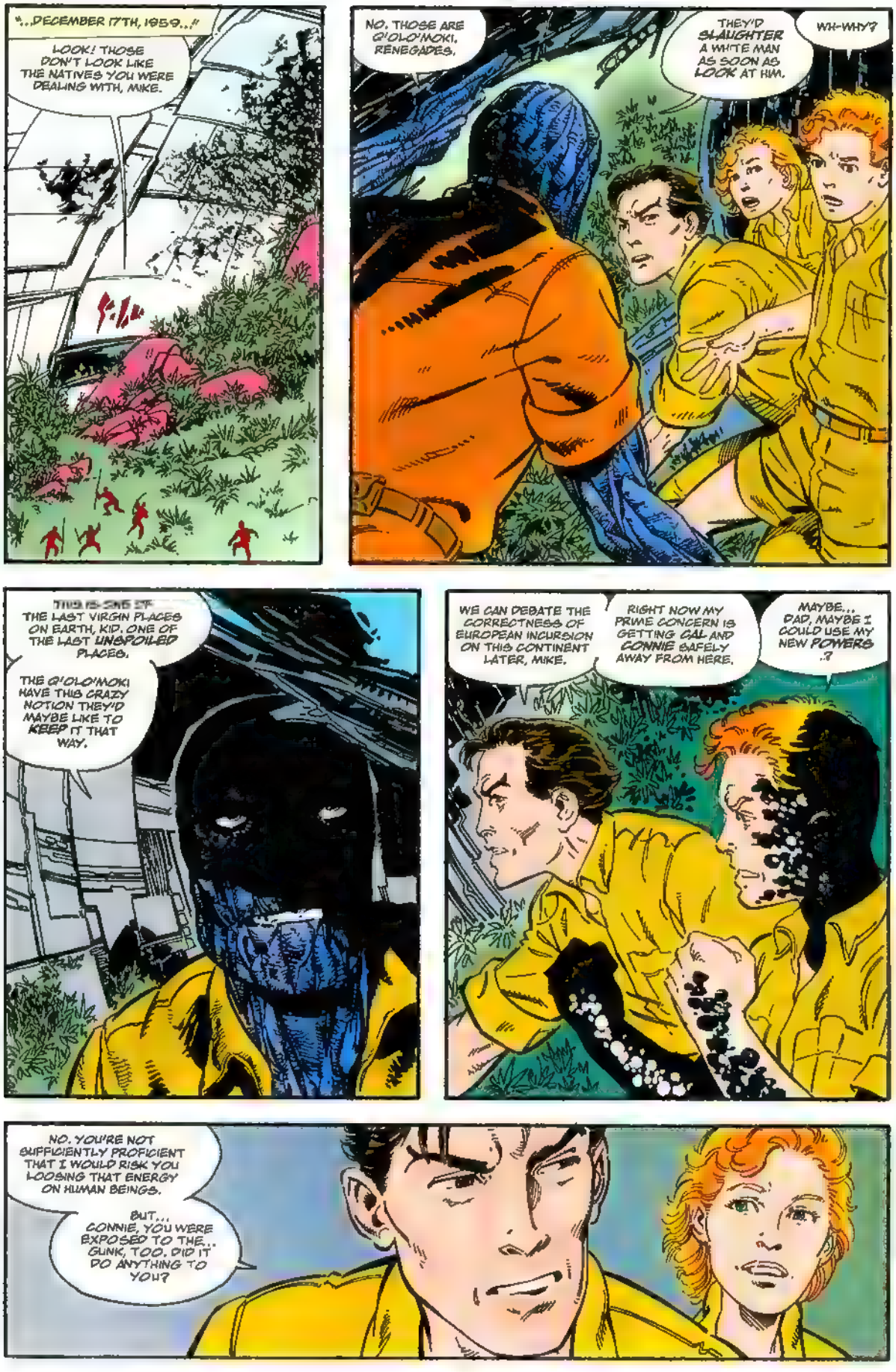
"OUR TROUBLES ARE ONLY STARTING..."
OBVIOUSLY I'M GOING TO HAVE TO TAKE STEPS TO PROTECT YOU, AVA.
ONCE MY OTHER SELF RETURNS FROM EXAMINING CORPORAL LAFAYETTE...
SHE WASN'T THERE.
SHE AND CAL CARSON ESCAPED.
WHAT?
IT'S BUZZING ALL OVER THE INFIRMARY LEVEL. THEY STOLE A SMALL G-OP CHOPPER AND TOOK OFF.
THE REST OF THE G-OPS ARE IN PURSUIT.
THIS COMPLICATES MATTERS.
I WAS HOPING TO ENLIST CAL CARSON IN MY MAD LITTLE SCHEME.
I AM NEVER GOING TO GET USED TO THE THREE OF YOU TALKING LIKE YOU'RE ALL ONE MIND.
I'M AFRAID IT'S NOT SOMETHING I WANT YOU TO GET USED TO, AVA.
I SAID I WANTED TO PROTECT YOU, AND THIS IS THE ONLY WAY I CAN THINK OF TO ACCOMPLISH THAT END.

HERE... TIE HER UP WHILE I TAKE CARE OF MAXWELL.
JUST WHAT I WAS ABOUT TO SAY.
I'VE OFTEN THOUGHT IT WOULD BE A DISTINCT ADVANTAGE IN MY WORK IF I COULD BE IN THREE PLACES AT ONCE...
...BUT HAVING YOU CLONES AROUND IS BEGINNING TO GET ON MY NERVES.
CLONES? LET ME REMIND YOU, FRIEND, IF THERE'S ANYONE HERE WHO'S A CLONE...
STOP IT!
WE'RE ALL THREE DISORIENTED BY THIS DECIDEDLY UNIQUE EXPERIENCE.
BUT WE CAN'T WASTE TIME SQUABBLING LIKE SPOILED SIBLINGS.
YOU'RE RIGHT. THERE'S A JOB TO BE DONE, AND UNLESS I MISS MY GUESS...


"...THERE'S ONLY ONE MAN WHO CAN HELP ME DO IT..."
WHERE ARE WE?
WE FLEW CROSS-COUNTRY SO FAST I COULDN'T BEGIN TO KEEP TRACK.
AND WITH NO SUN TO SERVE AS A COMPASS POINT...
WE FLEW SOUTH AND EAST, CAL. THIS IS LOUISIANA, AND THIS IS THE HOUSE I GREW UP IN.
MY GREAT-GREAT-GRANDMOTHER'S HOUSE.
SHE'S QUITE THE LADY. SHE ADMITS TO BEING A HUNDRED AND TWELVE...
...BUT MY GREAT GRANDFATHER--HER SON--WAS A HUNDRED AND SIX WHEN HE DIED THREE YEARS AGO.
GRAM? YO, GRAM?
YOU SURE SHE'S STILL HERE?

I'M HERE.
WHO YOU?
EEP!
GRAM? IT'S ME IT'S TERESA. DO YOU REMEMBER?
CORS I MEMBER.
BIN LONG TIME, CHILD. WHO HE?
GRAM, YOU REMEMBER WHEN I WAS A LITTLE GIRL? ALL THE STORIES YOU TOLD ME ABOUT HOW IT WAS BEFORE THE XLERII CAME? ABOUT THE SUPERHEROES, AND DANGER UNLIMITED?
WELL, THIS IS CAL CARSON. HE WAS THERMAL, YOU REMEMBER?
I MEMBER. SINCE WHEN YOU GET ALL WORRIED BOUT MY MEMRY, CHILD?
YOU REALLY CAL CARSON? I THOT YOU DEAD.
I... WELL...


"...I SORT OF WAS..."
AND THAT'S ALL WE REALLY KNOW, GRAM. CAL WAS IN SUSPENDED ANIMATION FOR SEVENTY-FOUR YEARS.
I MEMBER. BACK IN EIGHTY-FIVE. THAT WAS THE LAST WE SEED OF YOU AN' DANGER UNLIMITED.
THAT WAS WHEN YOU HEADQUARTERS GOT ALL SEALED AWAY INSIDE SOME KIND FORCE FIELD.
A "TIME-LOCK," THEY CALL IT.
AND I WAS IN A STASIS FIELD INSIDE IT.
AT LEAST, THAT'S WHAT TERRY TELLS ME. I'M AFRAID I DON'T REMEMBER MUCH OF IT MYSELF.
SOME OF IT, THOUGH. YOU REMEMBER SOME OF IT.
ONLY WITH THE HELP OF THIS MNEMONIC STIMULATOR.
YOU SEE, MRS. LAFAYETTE, I TYPE IN A DATE AND IT HELPS ME SORT OUT THAT TIME FROM MY MEMORY.
WELL, LIKE IF I TYPE IN...
12 17 1959


"...DECEMBER 17TH, 1959..."
LOOK! THOSE DON'T LOOK LIKE THE NATIVES YOU WERE DEALING WITH, MIKE.
NO. THOSE ARE Q'OLO'MOKI. RENEGADES.
THEY'D SLAUGHTER A WHITE MAN AS SOON AS LOOK AT HIM.
WH-WHY?
THIS IS ONE OF THE LAST VIRGIN PLACES ON EARTH, KID. ONE OF THE LAST UNSPOILED PLACES.
THE Q'OLO'MOKI HAVE THIS CRAZY NOTION THEY'D MAYBE LIKE TO KEEP IT THAT WAY.
WE CAN DEBATE THE CORRECTNESS OF EUROPEAN INCURSION ON THIS CONTINENT LATER, MIKE.
RIGHT NOW MY PRIME CONCERN IS GETTING CAL AND CONNIE SAFELY AWAY FROM HERE.
MAYBE... DAD, MAYBE I COULD USE MY NEW POWERS .?
NO. YOU'RE NOT SUFFICIENTLY PROFICIENT THAT I WOULD RISK YOU LOOSING THAT ENERGY ON HUMAN BEINGS.
BUT... CONNIE, YOU WERE EXPOSED TO THE... GUNK, TOO. DID IT DO ANYTHING TO YOU?

NO... EXCEPT IT MADE MY HEAD HURT.
MM. NEUROLOGICAL REALIGNMENT. THE WHOLE PURPOSE OF THOSE TUBES AND THAT "GUNK" IS TO ADAPT THE ALIENS WHO BUILT THIS SHIP.
ADAPT THEM FOR DIFFERENT ROLES AS WARRIORS.
HOW DO YOU KNOW THAT, DAD?

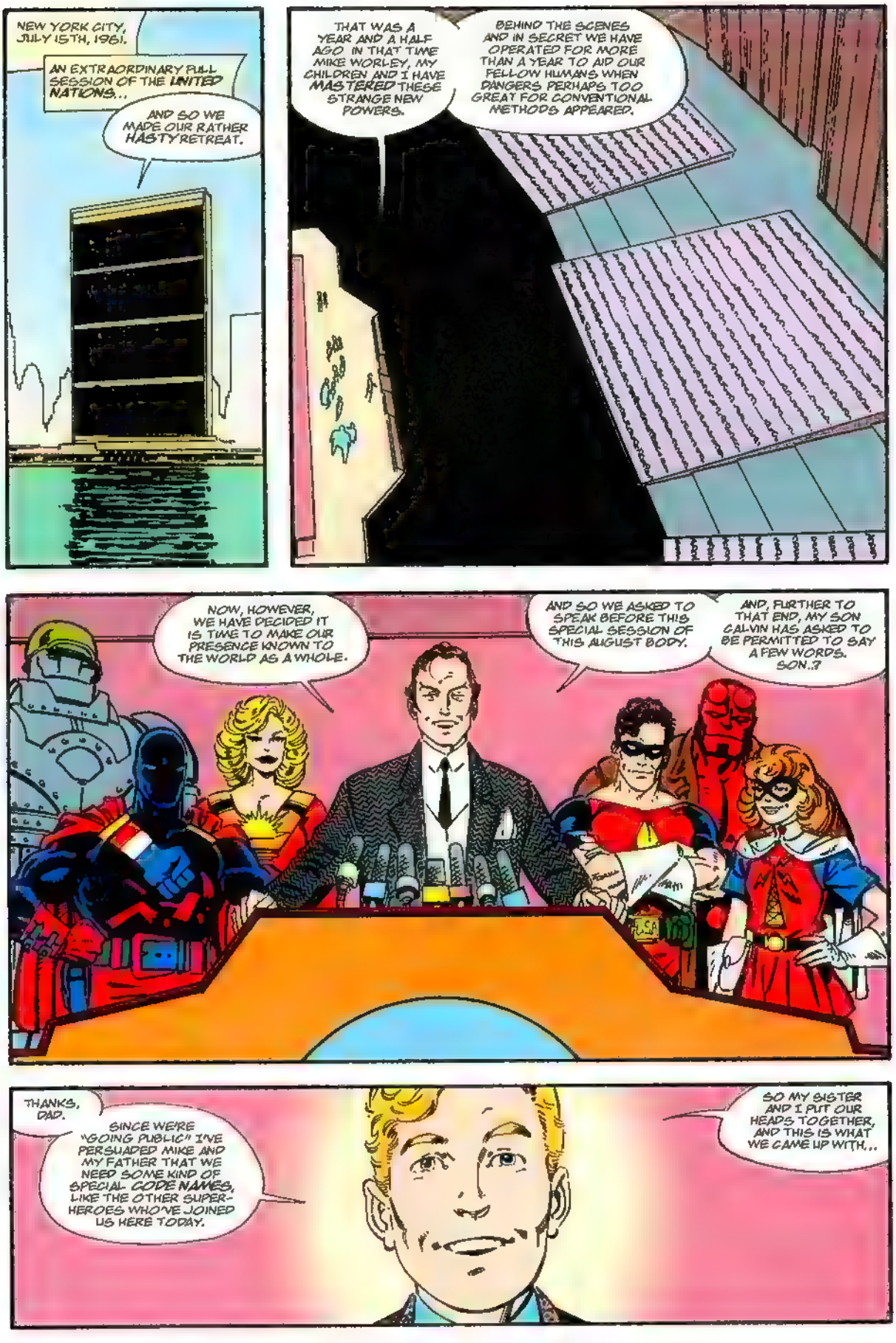
..? WHY... THAT'S ODD. I'M NOT SURE HOW I KNOW. I JUST... DO.
IT'S AS IF A WHOLE ENCYCLOPEDIA HAS BEEN INSERTED INTO MY HEAD, AND ALL I HAVE TO DO IS ACCESS THE PROPER INFORMATION...
WELL, IF ANY OF IT TELLS YOU SOMETHING WE CAN MAKE USE OF...

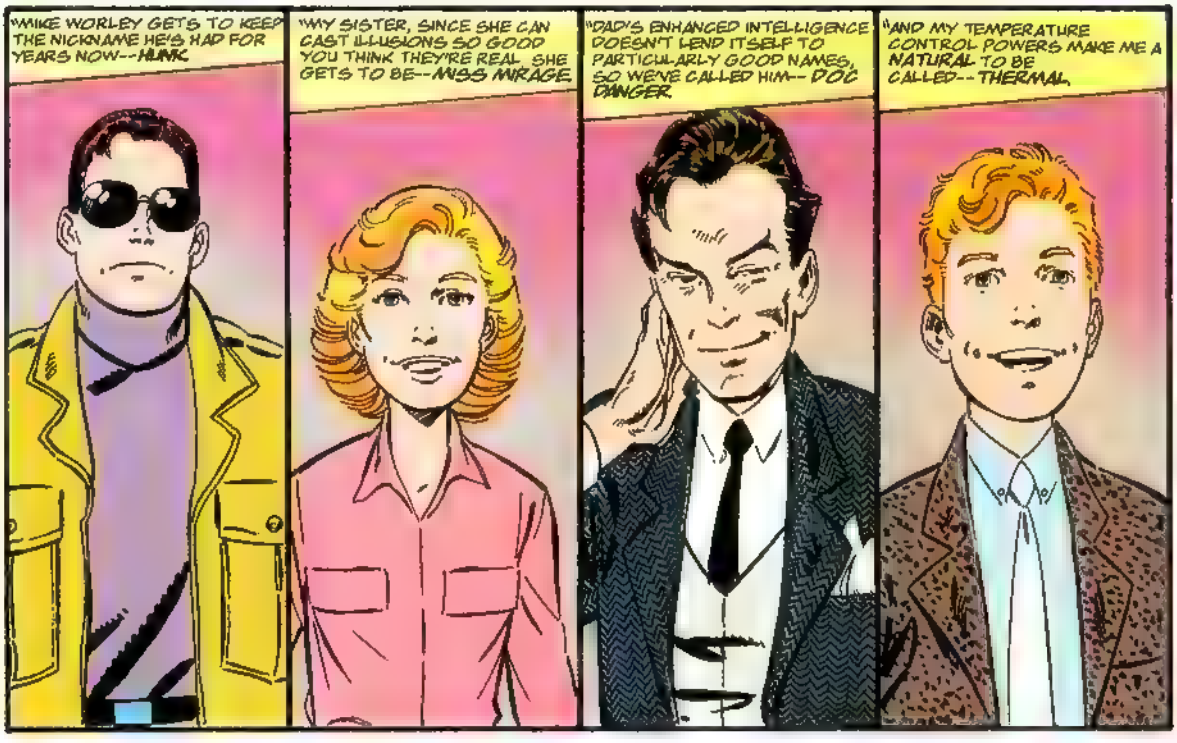
...YOU'D BETTER "ACCESS" IT PRONTO.
THE G'OLO'MOKI DON'T CONSIDER THIS A HOLY PLACE, AND THEY WON'T THINK TWICE ABOUT COMING IN AFTER US.

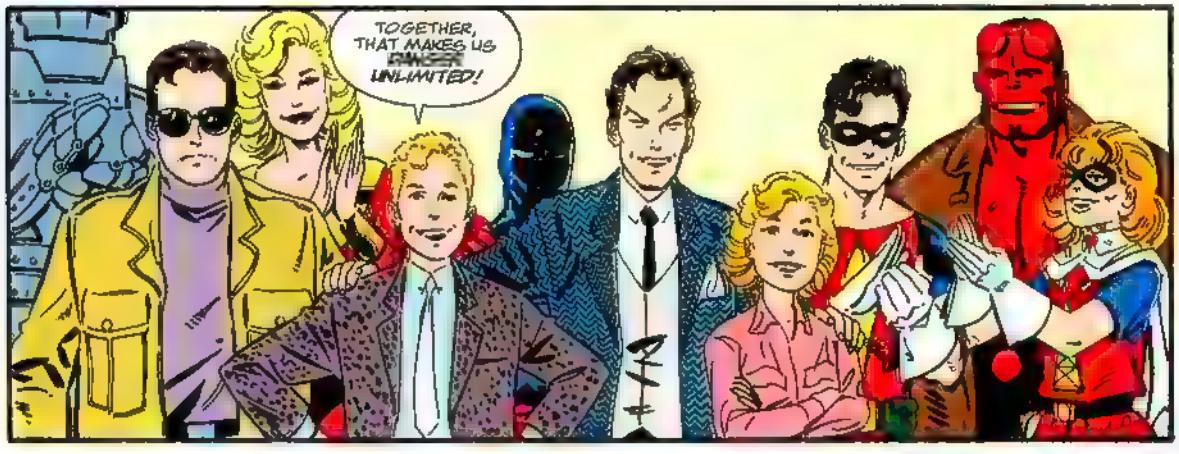
YES... CONNIE... DO YOU FEEL ANY DIFFERENT? CAN YOU SENSE WHAT THE "GUNK" DID TO YOU?
I'M NOT SURE, DAD. I FEEL LIKE... LIKE I HAVE ALL THESE PICTURES IN MY HEAD... BUT THEY'RE NOT JUST PICTURES...

I FEEL LIKE I CAN... PUSH THEM OUTSIDE.

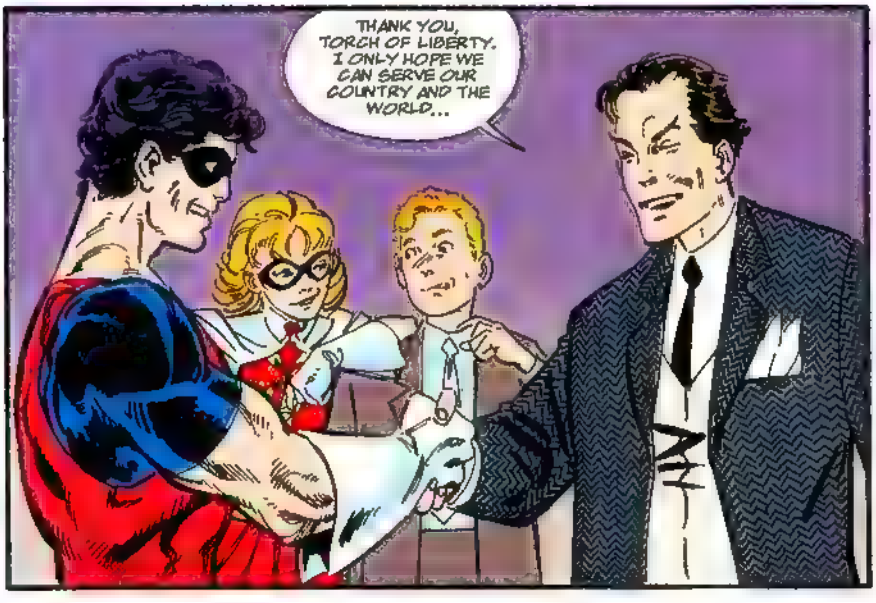
"I CAN MAKE THEM REAL..."

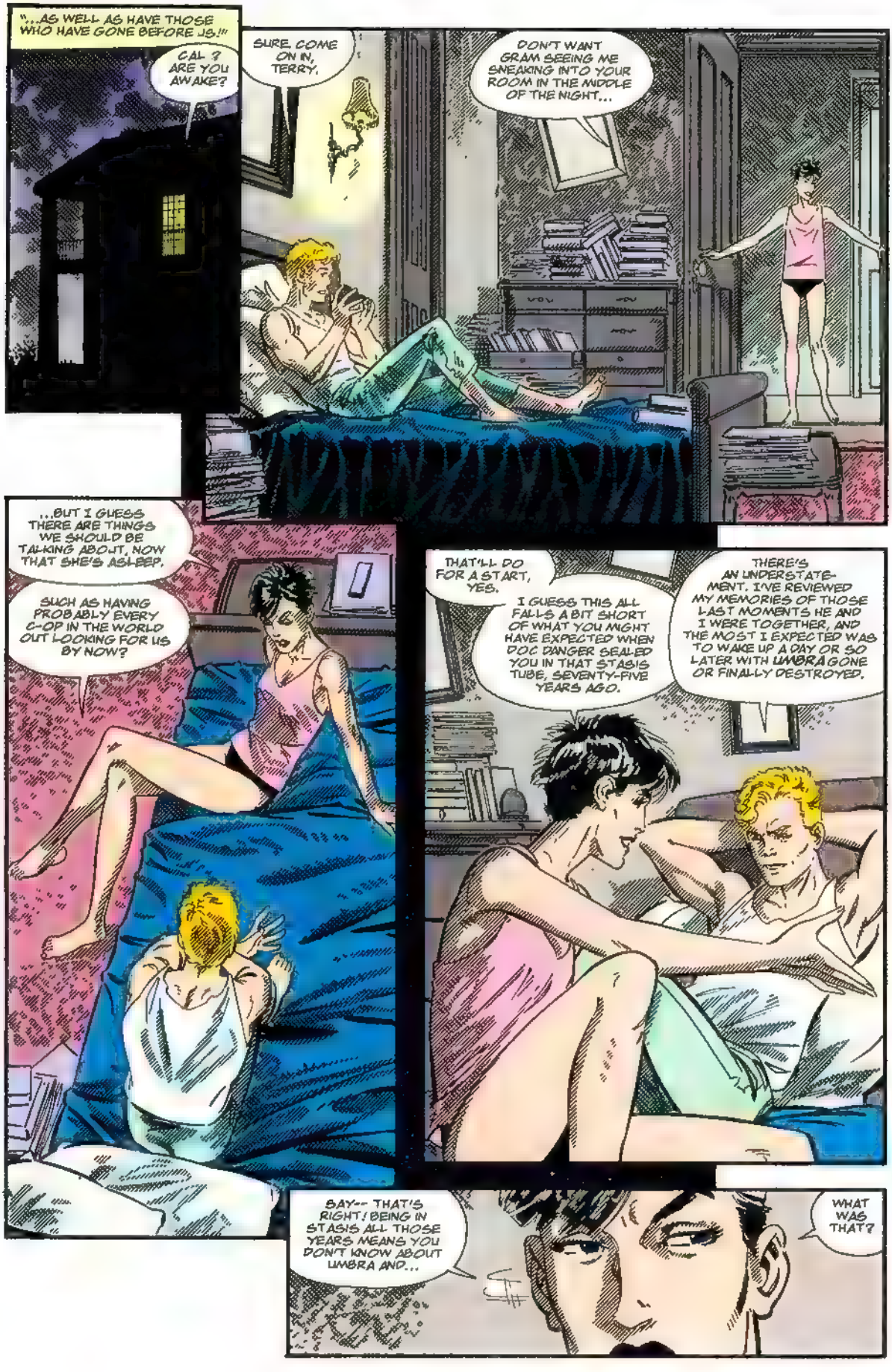

NEW YORK CITY, JULY 15TH, 1961.
AN EXTRAORDINARY FULL SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS..
AND SO WE MADE OUR RATHER HASTY RETREAT.
THAT WAS A YEAR AND A HALF AGO IN THAT TIME MIKE WORLEY, MY CHILDREN AND I HAVE MASTERED THESE STRANGE NEW POWERS.
BEHIND THE SCENES AND IN SECRET WE HAVE OPERATED FOR MORE THAN A YEAR TO AID OUR FELLOW HUMANS WHEN DANGERS PERHAPS TOO GREAT FOR CONVENTIONAL METHODS APPEARED.
NOW, HOWEVER, WE HAVE DECIDED IT IS TIME TO MAKE OUR PRESENCE KNOWN TO THE WORLD AS A WHOLE.
AND SO WE ASKED TO SPEAK BEFORE THIS SPECIAL SESSION OF THIS AUGUST BODY.
AND, FURTHER TO THAT END, MY SON CALVIN HAS ASKED TO BE PERMITTED TO SAY A FEW WORDS. SON..?
THANKS, DAD.
SINCE WE'RE "GOING PUBLIC" I'VE PERSUADED MIKE AND MY FATHER THAT WE NEED SOME KIND OF SPECIAL CODE NAMES, LIKE THE OTHER SUPER-HEROES WHO'VE JOINED US HERE TODAY.
SO MY SISTER AND I PUT OUR HEADS TOGETHER, AND THIS IS WHAT WE CAME UP WITH..

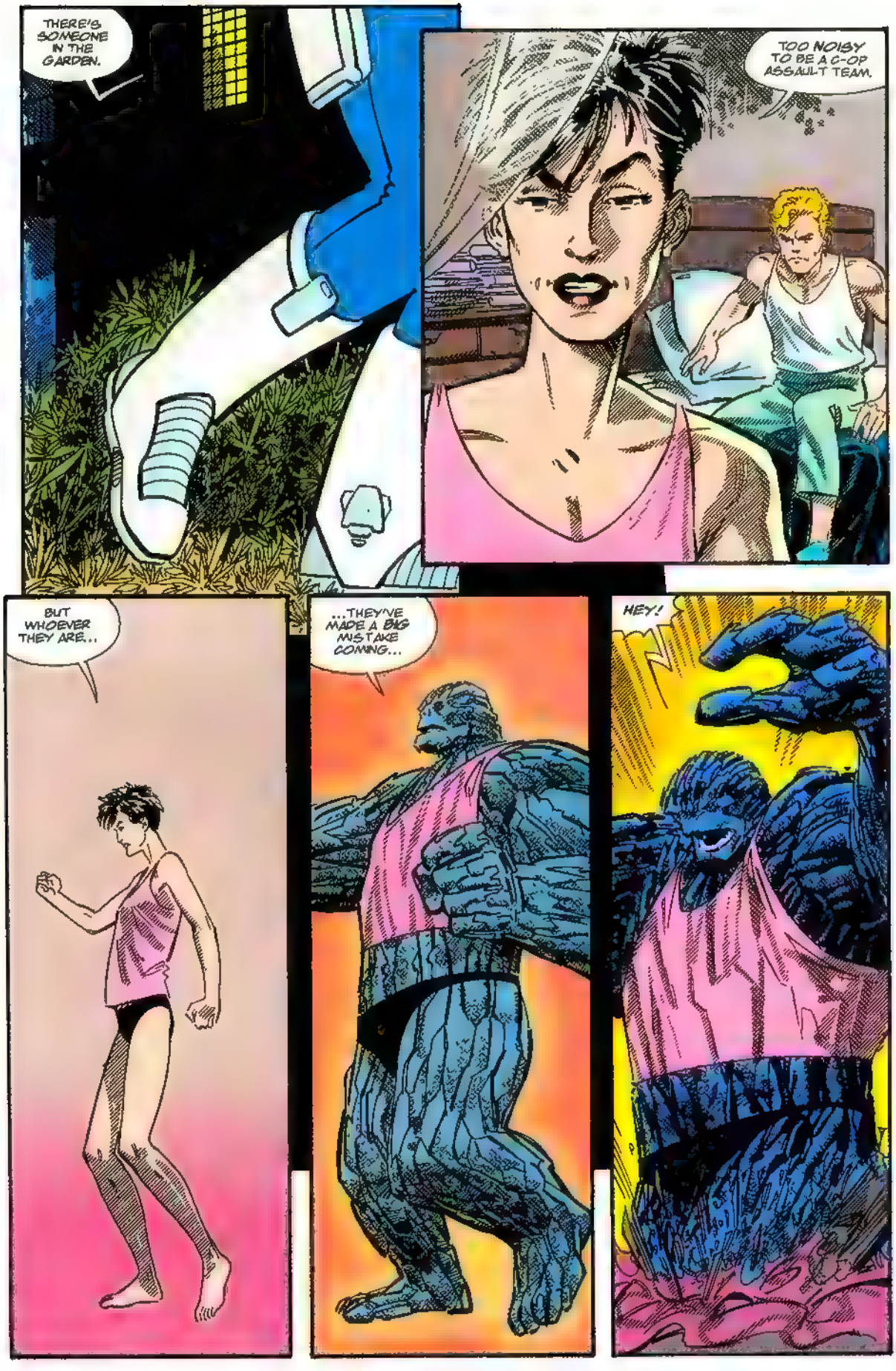

"MIKE WORLEY GETS TO KEEP THE NICKNAME HE'S HAD FOR YEARS NOW--HUNK.
"MY SISTER, SINCE SHE CAN CAST ILLUSIONS SO GOOD YOU THINK THEY'RE REAL, SHE GETS TO BE--MISS MIRAGE.
"DAD'S ENHANCED INTELLIGENCE DOESN'T LEND ITSELF TO PARTICULARLY GOOD NAMES, SO WE'VE CALLED HIM-- DOC DANGER.
"AND MY TEMPERATURE CONTROL POWERS MAKE ME A NATURAL TO BE CALLED--THERMAL.

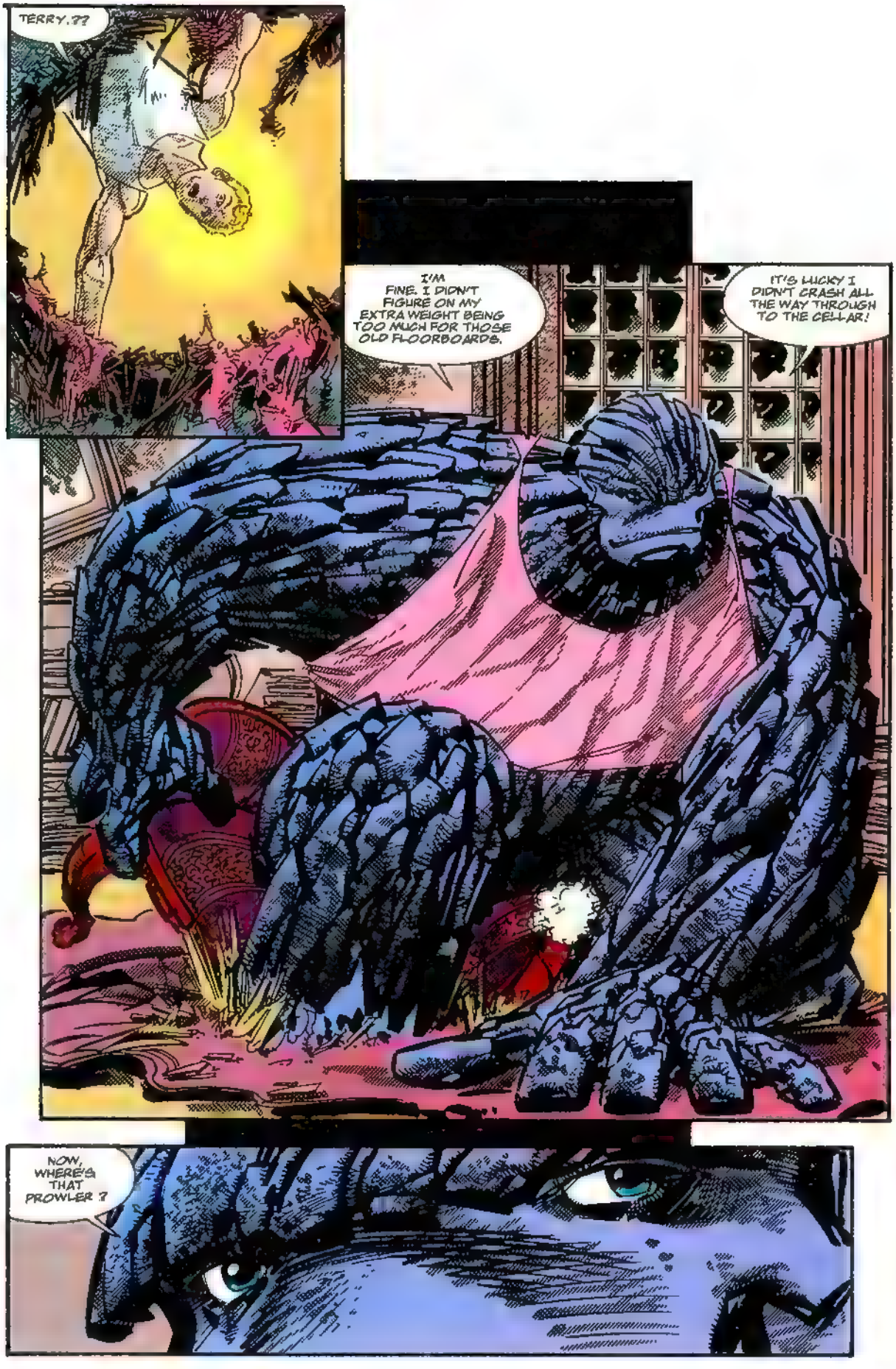

TOGETHER, THAT MAKES US DANGER UNLIMITED!

AND I'D JUST LIKE TO SAY, ON BEHALF OF MYSELF AND THE OTHER MEMBERS OF THE SENTINELS OF FREEDOM, THAT WE'RE REAL GLAD TO HAVE FOLKS LIKE MIKE WORLEY AND THE CARSON FAMILY ON OUR SIDE!


THANK YOU, TORCH OF LIBERTY. I ONLY HOPE WE CAN SERVE OUR COUNTRY AND THE WORLD...

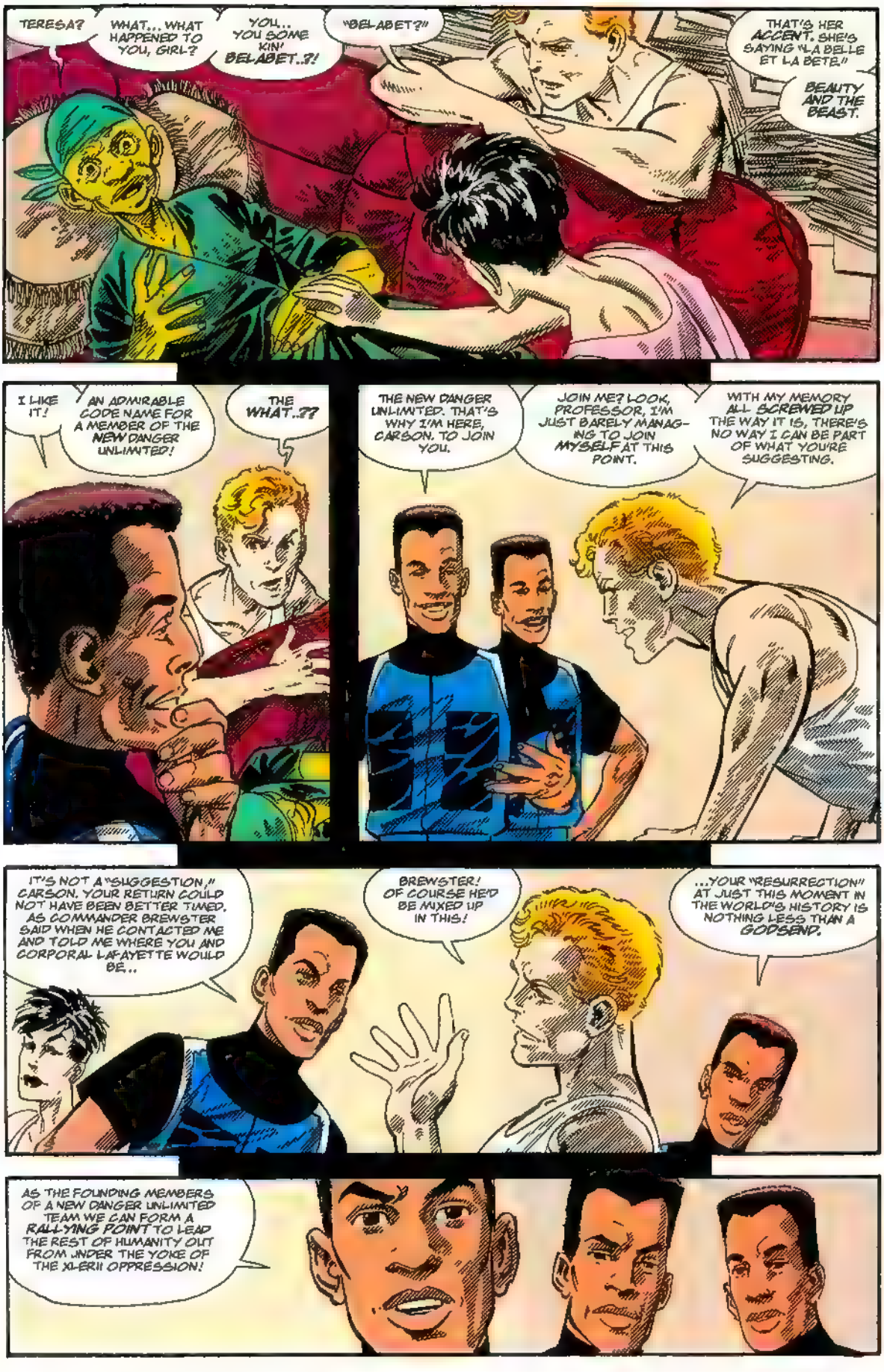

"...AS WELL AS HAVE THOSE WHO HAVE GONE BEFORE US!"
CAL ? ARE YOU AWAKE?
SURE. COME ON IN, TERRY.
DON'T WANT GRAM SEEING ME SNEAKING INTO YOUR ROOM IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT...
...BUT I GUESS THERE ARE THINGS WE SHOULD BE TALKING ABOUT, NOW THAT SHE'S ASLEEP.
SUCH AS HAVING PROBABLY EVERY C-OP IN THE WORLD OUT LOOKING FOR US BY NOW?
THAT'LL DO FOR A START, YES.
I GUESS THIS ALL FALLS A BIT SHORT OF WHAT YOU MIGHT HAVE EXPECTED WHEN DOC DANGER SEALED YOU IN THAT STASIS TUBE, SEVENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO.
THERE'S AN UNDERSTATEMENT. I'VE REVIEWED MY MEMORIES OF THOSE LAST MOMENTS HE AND I WERE TOGETHER, AND THE MOST I EXPECTED WAS TO WAKE UP A DAY OR SO LATER WITH UMBRA GONE OR FINALLY DESTROYED.
BAY-- THAT'S RIGHT! BEING IN STASIS ALL THOSE YEARS MEANS YOU DON'T KNOW ABOUT UMBRA AND...
WHAT WAS THAT?

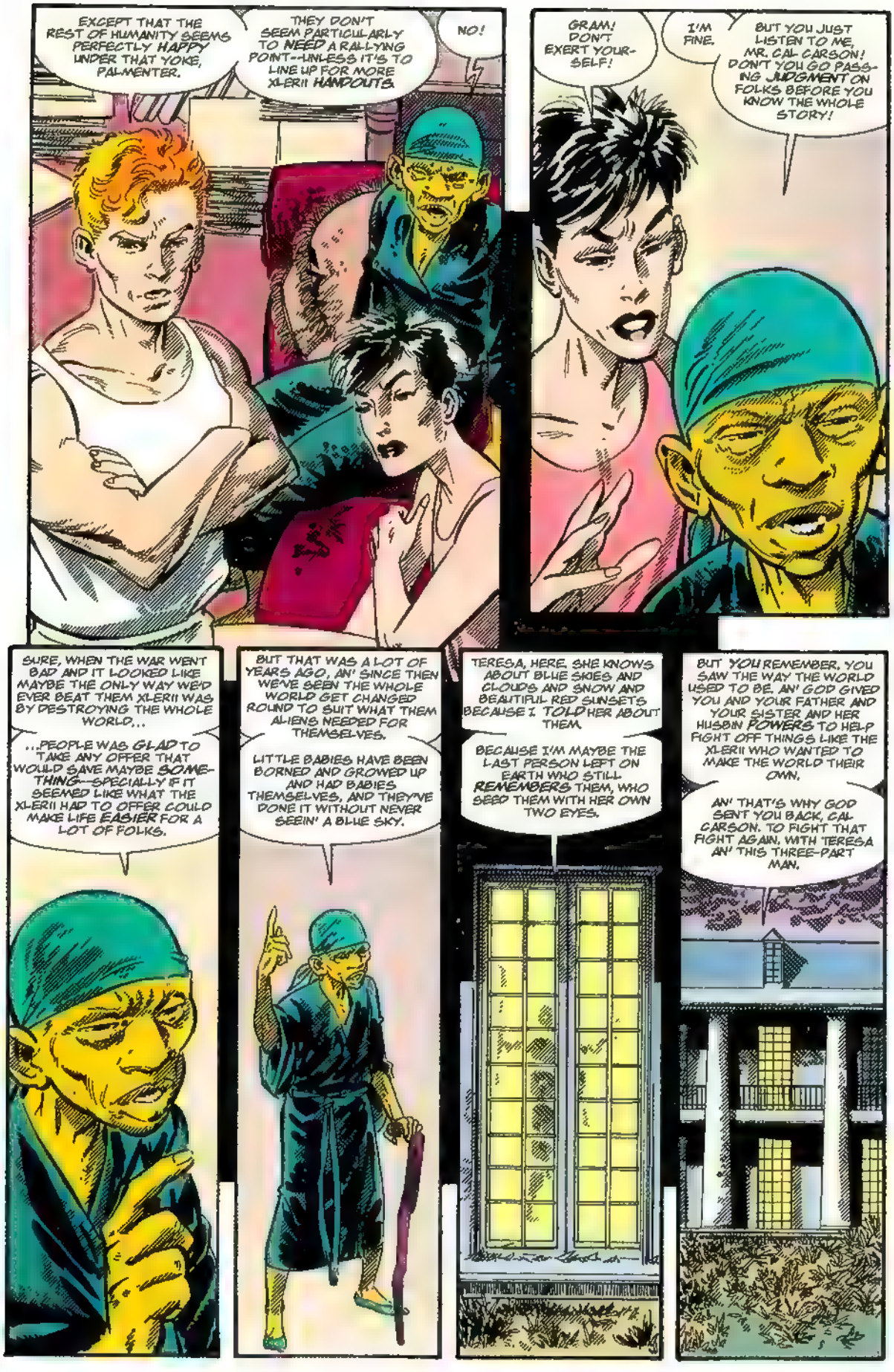

THERE'S SOMEONE IN THE GARDEN.
TOO NOISY TO BE A C-OP ASSAULT TEAM.
BUT WHOEVER THEY ARE...
...THEY'VE MADE A BIG MISTAKE COMING...
HEY!

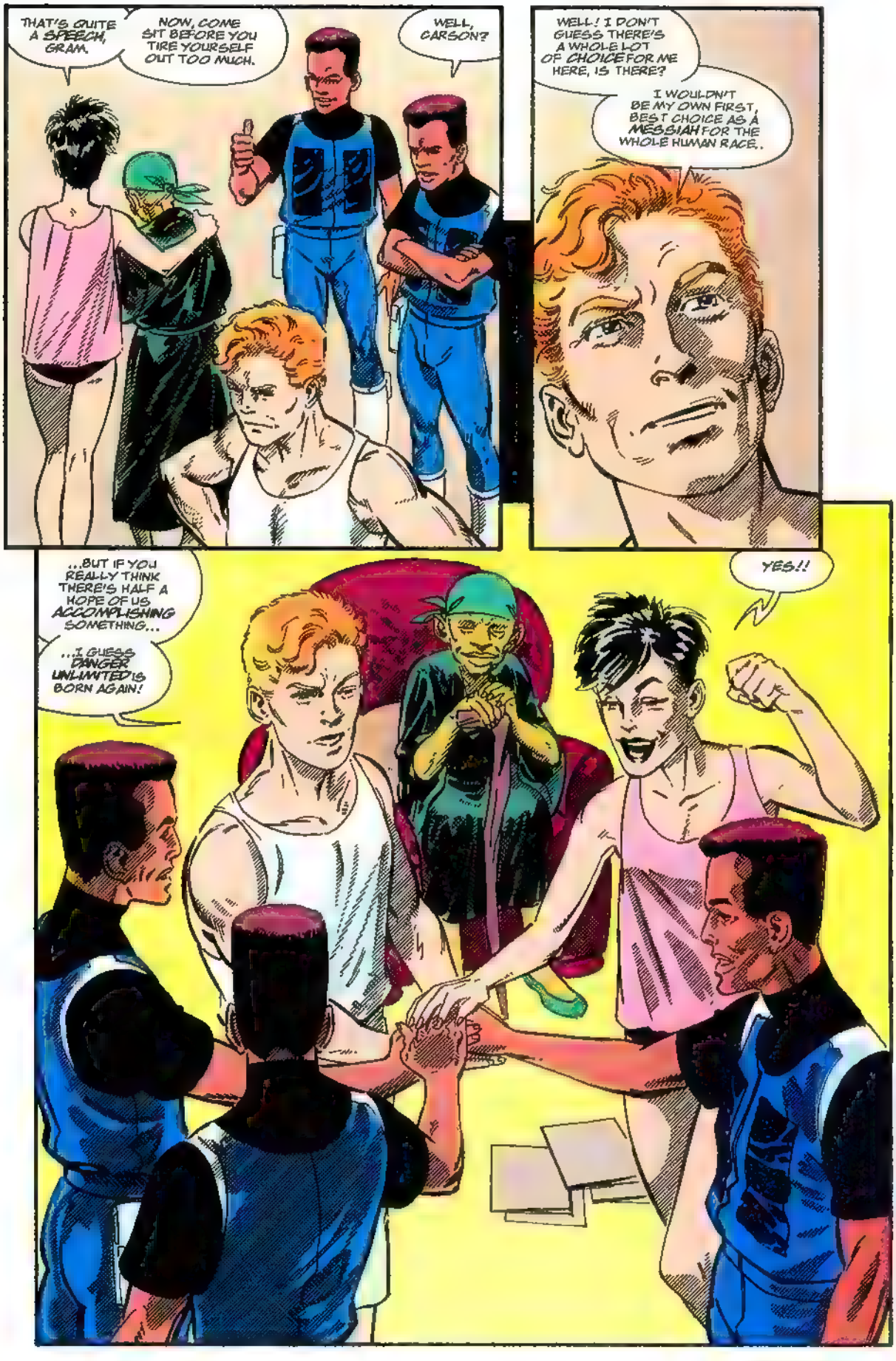

TERRY.??
I'M FINE. I DIDN'T FIGURE ON MY EXTRA WEIGHT BEING TOO MUCH FOR THOSE OLD FLOORBOARDS.
IT'S LUCKY I DIDN'T CRASH ALL THE WAY THROUGH TO THE CELLAR!
NOW, WHERE'S THAT PROWLER ?

RIGHT HERE.
AND HERE.
AND HERE.
WHAT IN THE..?
TRIPLET BURGLARS?
NOT QUITE.
I.. THAT IS, WE ARE PROFESSOR DAVIS PALMENTER.
BUT WE'VE DECIDED WE PREFER TO BE KNOWN AS CALIUS.

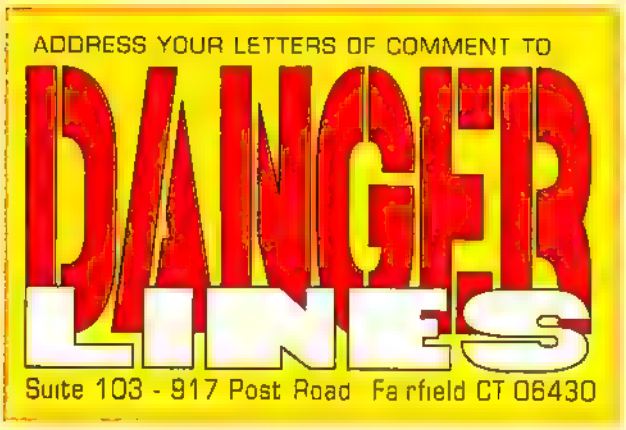
PREFER TO BE KNOWN ?
WHAT'S ALL THIS NOISE? WHAT'S.?
WHAT IN ?
OH-HHH...
I'VE GOT HER!
SHE'LL BE FINE, SHE JUST FAINTED.
HOWEVER, SINCE I PRESUME YOU CAN, CORPORAL LAFAYETTE...
...I SUGGEST YOU REVERT TO HUMAN FORM BEFORE SHE RECOVERS CONSCIOUSNESS.
GOOD IDEA.


TERESA?
WHAT... WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU, GIRL?
YOU... YOU SOME KIN' BELABET..?!
"BELABET?"
THAT'S HER ACCENT. SHE'S SAYING "LA BELLE ET LA BETE."
BEAUTY AND THE BEAST.
I LIKE IT!
AN ADMIRABLE CODE NAME FOR A MEMBER OF THE NEW DANGER UNLIMITED!
THE WHAT..??
THE NEW DANGER UNLIMITED. THAT'S WHY I'M HERE, CARSON. TO JOIN YOU.
JOIN ME? LOOK, PROFESSOR, I'M JUST BARELY MANAGING TO JOIN MYSELF AT THIS POINT.
WITH MY MEMORY ALL SCREWED UP THE WAY IT IS, THERE'S NO WAY I CAN BE PART OF WHAT YOU'RE SUGGESTING.
IT'S NOT A "SUGGESTION," CARSON. YOUR RETURN COULD NOT HAVE BEEN BETTER TIMED. AS COMMANDER BREWSTER SAID WHEN HE CONTACTED ME AND TOLD ME WHERE YOU AND CORPORAL LAFAYETTE WOULD BE...
BREWSTER! OF COURSE HE'D BE MIXED UP IN THIS!
...YOUR "RESURRECTION" AT JUST THIS MOMENT IN THE WORLD'S HISTORY IS NOTHING LESS THAN A GODSEND.
AS THE FOUNDING MEMBERS OF A NEW DANGER UNLIMITED TEAM WE CAN FORM A RALLYING POINT TO LEAD THE REST OF HUMANITY OUT FROM UNDER THE YOKE OF THE XI-ERII OPPRESSION!


EXCEPT THAT THE REST OF HUMANITY SEEMS PERFECTLY HAPPY UNDER THAT YOKE, PALMENTER.
THEY DON'T SEEM PARTICULARLY TO NEED A RALLYING POINT--UNLESS IT'S TO LINE UP FOR MORE XLERII HANDOUTS.
NO!
GRAM! DON'T EXERT YOURSELF!
I'M FINE.
BUT YOU JUST LISTEN TO ME, MR. CAL CARSON! DON'T YOU GO PASSING JUDGMENT ON FOLKS BEFORE YOU KNOW THE WHOLE STORY!
SURE, WHEN THE WAR WENT BAD AND IT LOOKED LIKE MAYBE THE ONLY WAY WE'D EVER BEAT THEM XLERII WAS BY DESTROYING THE WHOLE WORLD...
...PEOPLE WAS GLAD TO TAKE ANY OFFER THAT WOULD SAVE MAYBE SOMETHING--SPECIALLY IF IT SEEMED LIKE WHAT THE XLERII HAD TO OFFER COULD MAKE LIFE EASIER FOR A LOT OF FOLKS.
BUT THAT WAS A LOT OF YEARS AGO, AN' SINCE THEN WE'VE SEEN THE WHOLE WORLD GET CHANGED ROUND TO SUIT WHAT THEM ALIENS NEEDED FOR THEMSELVES.
LITTLE BABIES HAVE BEEN BORNED AND GROWED UP AND HAD BABIES THEMSELVES, AND THEY'VE DONE IT WITHOUT NEVER SEEIN' A BLUE SKY.
TERESA, HERE, SHE KNOWS ABOUT BLUE SKIES AND CLOUDS AND SNOW AND BEAUTIFUL RED SUNSETS BECAUSE I TOLD HER ABOUT THEM.
BECAUSE I'M MAYBE THE LAST PERSON LEFT ON EARTH WHO STILL REMEMBERS THEM, WHO SEED THEM WITH HER OWN TWO EYES.
BUT YOU REMEMBER. YOU SAW THE WAY THE WORLD USED TO BE. AN' GOD GIVED YOU AND YOUR FATHER AND YOUR SISTER AND HER HUSBIN POWERS TO HELP FIGHT OFF THINGS LIKE THE XLERII WHO WANTED TO MAKE THE WORLD THEIR OWN.
AN' THAT'S WHY GOD SENT YOU BACK, CAL CARSON. TO FIGHT THAT FIGHT AGAIN, WITH TERESA AN' THIS THREE-PART MAN.


THAT'S QUITE A SPEECH, GRAM.
NOW, COME SIT BEFORE YOU TIRE YOURSELF OUT TOO MUCH.
WELL, CARSON?
WELL! I DON'T GUESS THERE'S A WHOLE LOT OF CHOICE FOR ME HERE, IS THERE?
I WOULDN'T BE MY OWN FIRST, BEST CHOICE AS A MESSIAH FOR THE WHOLE HUMAN RACE..
...BUT IF YOU REALLY THINK THERE'S HALF A HOPE OF US ACCOMPLISHING SOMETHING...
...I GUESS DANGER UNLIMITED IS BORN AGAIN!
YES!!

THE END...?



Before We Begin: ***DU*** is only four issues old and already I'm vexed by misquotations! For the record, I have never, ever, anywhere said that ***Danger Unlimited*** was intended to be "*Fantastic Four* done right." Stan Lee and Jack Kirby took care of that quite nicely, thank you. What I *did* say was that ***DU*** is intended to be the same *kind* of book as was my own run on *Fantastic Four*, and my reason for doing it, being snotty as can be, is that "no one else seems to be doing *Fantastic Four*." Got it? Got it!

Reginald Nash
Athens, GA
I am assuming this is not the same universe as ***John Byrne's Next Men*** because ***Danger Unlimited*** is good ole fashioned CRAP! Doc Danger?! Golgotha?! Miss Mirage?! Hunk Worley?! Thermal?! Umbra?! Let me pause, for I must now VOMIT! Why does the art look so fuzzy? Looks like a fax or cheap (as in very) photocopy. This book better not replace ***JBNM***, and no crossovers! Marvel will flip when they find out you kidnapped Doctor Doom and slapped him on the last page! Will they pay the ransom? Only time will tell…

Come on, Reg. Don't hold back. What did you *really* think? (By the way, absolutely the *worst* way to get me to do—or not do—anything is to tell me I'd "better not." In fact, it's the quickest way to get me to do the *opposite* of what you want! So, let's see, the earliest issue *DU* can cross over with *JBNM* would be…)

Andrew M. Kaplan
Dayton, OH
You drop us into a story in progress, introducing us to a bunch of super-powered characters and situations without much explanation, in the first issue of your brand-new series. What is this, an Image book? Seriously, though, with Thermal's amnesia, I fully expect the details to be filled out as we go along. You gave us an engaging first issue that hooked me from the very first page. The concept of parallel storylines intrigues me greatly, and I look forward to reading the adventures of both Danger Unlimited teams for some time to come.
It's been a while since we've seen two John Byrne series on the stands, as far as I recall, but now all those nostalgic readers can see that you truly do use slightly different styles on different series. The art on this is clearly distinct from the style used on ***JBNM***. This seems more reminiscent of your early Marvel art. Maybe it's the Duo-Shade, which reminds me of Terry Austin's rich inking.

Unfortunately, the paper and printing we've used to allow the lower price-tag on *DU* is somewhat "intolerant" of the Duo-Shade, so I won't be using it on future issues. Ah, well…

I liked the fact that no Duo-Shade was used in the flashback sequence, giving it a different, more old-fashioned feel.

Mm. Now I guess I'll have to come up with something else. I wonder, would different *lettering* work, or would it just look like a mistake?

I also loved the ***Torch of Liberty*** story. Kieron Dwyer gave it a perfect Simon/Kirby touch, while maintaining his own style. It's nice to see an artist who remembers that clothes develop folds and wrinkles which create shadows. I think I'll be looking forward to this part of the book as much as the main story.

Looking forward to an "unlimited" run on this series of miniseries.

Me too.

Daniel Preece
Florence, KY
It certainly is a shame that you no longer work for Marvel or DC. ***Danger Unlimited*** #1 proves beyond a doubt that you can still breathe new life into an old concept. Your run on *Fantastic Four* is tied with Miller's *Daredevil* as the single greatest run on any title by any creative team. (I had truly hoped that ***DU*** would be the *FF* since "no one else is doing that title.") The first comic I ever collected was *FF* #232 and I have since worn out three copies from rereading. For me, that book set the standards for every comic I have read since. (Yes, I am disappointed a lot lately.) I am very happy that you are doing a cosmic-hero book again. It's been a long time.

One of the strangest things about doing *DU* is getting my brain back into the old mode: first dramatic cliffhanger endings, second wild and woolly pseudo-science. I've spent two years pulling myself back on *Next Men*, and that more realistic, more sedate pace has now become second nature. I found myself having to rewrite *DU* a couple of times to get more *oomph* into it. (As I approached the end of issue three, for instance, I could not think of a suitable ending until, remembering "where" I was, I thought "blow something up!")

The ***Torch of Liberty*** story was excellent. So you're doing Captain America, too? Good. No one is doing that book, either. You might as well do all of Marvel while you're at it. Somebody should. What surprised me is that you farmed out the art to somebody else. I'd never have expected that.

At least I kept it all in the family, Dan. I asked Kieron to handle the art chores on *ToL* for a couple of reasons, not the least of which was his previous experience with yon similar character. The Torch is not meant to be a Captain America clone, though, strictly speaking. Obviously there are superficial similarities, but, as I hope the first episode demonstrated, *ToL* is going to take a somewhat harder look at the realities of war—and other epochs—than has been traditional in *Captain America*. The fact that the Torch was blowing away Nazis left, right, and center should have underscored that point immediately! (As to doing the rest of Marvel, well there's this book I have in mind about a guy named Theodore Maizin, who's the world's greatest secret agent, and the way he achieves this success is by posing as the security guard at the entrance to various embassies. Yes, this would be *Theo Maizin, Spy-Doorman*!)

Also, something in your books that's as good as the story is your opinions. Never leave those out. I don't bother to read a fan letter that doesn't merit an editorial comment, so don't ever keep mum. I am interested in what YOU have to say, not the other fans.

Hmm. Often I've received letters which so succinctly expressed themselves I felt no need to respond. I'm not going to hold back on my comments—though there will be no *DU* version of "A Flame About This High"—but I hope you realize my decision to print a letter is, in effect, a comment of its own.

Todd Gallina
Irvine, CA
I have noticed that your work greatly favors the role of the female character. Or should I say over-favors the female role. For example it

was you who dumped the Thing (a fan favorite) for the ridiculous She-Hulk. You killed Guardian and replaced him with a woman. You forced the Hulk into marriage. You made Phoebe in *Namor* as important as Subby himself. You brought back the ludicrous Supergirl. You gave the She-Hulk her own book when no one, but no one took her seriously. Now it would appear the Thing-like character in this book is... is... Yep, you guessed it.

Right now I will offer a small suggestion: Since market research shows the industry is completely dominated by the male gender (over 90%), your revolution is falling on deaf ears. None of us out here in comic fandom are steroid-pumpin', beer drinkin' wife-beaters, so we would like a little less of the "plight of the female hero" in comics.

Well, first of all...
Nah. It's not worth the effort.

Roger L. Rabb
Gatesville, TX

I think it's more than a little ironic that this series premieres just a few weeks after the loss of Jack Kirby. The feel of this book is so obviously reminiscent of Kirby's best work. I write without hesitation that the artistry and heroic vision of Jack Kirby, combined with the words and storytelling sense of Stan Lee, were singularly responsible for nurturing my love of comic books in the late 1960s. To some extent those books are still the standard I use to judge the quality of a comic-book series. I'm glad that the cosmic pageantry, grand storytelling, and truly heroic characterizations that made the Kirby/Lee production so dazzling to me twenty-five years ago are obviously intended to characterize this series as well.

The characters in ***Danger Unlimited*** really seem to reflect the type Jack Kirby spent his entire professional career creating. Your new characters seem to be "good guys," men and women who are larger than life and instilled with a sense of right and honor. I probably learned more about the virtues of honesty, nobility, and goodness from the stories of Kirby/Lee than from any other source. Given the current state of what passes for "heroic" storytelling in this medium, it's important that you keep reminding those of us who will listen that it takes more than a colorful costume (and a heck of a lot more than the ability to kill) to make a hero.

Amen, brother.

Stu Symons
Queens, NY

On page one of ***Danger Unlimited*** #1, the story is set in the year 2060. Is the date arbitrary or something more? When one character said that the members of DU had not been seen for seventy-five years, a light bulb went on over my head. I checked out some back issues and realized that your last issue of *Fantastic Four* was in 1986, roughly 75 years before 2060. Is this only a coincidence, John?

Is anything? I would be the last one to try to explain what goes on in the deepest recesses of my mind—to borrow a phrase from Mike Mignola, it's dark in there and your feet stick to the floor—but I was not *consciously* attempting to frame *DU* against any chronology other than their own. I picked 1959 as the year the group got their powers, and one century later as the year the "time-lock" on their old HQ would turn off. I arrived at 1985 as their "departure" date by adding forty-two years—the age I wanted him to be—to Cal's birth year of 1943, which was arrived at by subtracting 16 years from 1959.

• • • •

What you're holding in your hands is the last issue of ***Danger Unlimited*** you'll be seeing for a while—quite a while. Possibly forever.

Danger Unlimited was launched as an experiment—a test to see if the current marketplace would or could support an old fashioned superhero book—and, not to put too fine a point on it, the experiment failed. The sales on ***DU*** have been much, much less than what I'd hoped for. So much so that I cannot support the title past these first four issues.

It works like this: When ***John Byrne's Next Men*** debuted nearly three years ago, the first issue sold over four times what I expected the book to sell and, with equally strong sales on the second and third issues. Thus I was able to consider the entire first year of ***JBNM*** more or less "paid for" by the first three issues. I had a sizable cushion, in other words, which would allow the book to rise or fall with the vagaries of the marketplace. By the time ***JBNM*** settled to its present level of sales—still higher than I expected—I was in a good position to judge where the book was going and what kind of reader/customer support I could expect.

But the marketplace of today is very different from the one in which ***JBNM*** #1 was launched, a market in which books—mostly from Marvel, and mostly with an "X" in the title—routinely sold half a million, a million, three million. *X-Men* #1 sold *seven million*. Now, less than three years later, books that were million-plus sellers only a few months ago are barely able to drum up half a million in unit sales. Some view this as a collapse. I view it, to use a Wall Street term, as a normalization—the industry has returned very much to the shape it had before the speculator glut stretched it beyond its normal capacity. But the problem is, this drop in sales is across the whole spectrum of the marketplace, and while the "low end" books have not lost anything like the massive percentages those higher echelon books have, they have nevertheless been hard hit. Bottom line, ***Danger Unlimited*** #1 generated a lot fewer orders than ***JBNM*** #1. I say "orders" because, remember, this number does not represent people walking into the comic shops and buying the book off the rack—"sell-through"—but the orders placed, sight unseen, by retailers suddenly extremely cautious with their money; cautious and unwilling to take chances. So the "cushion" I enjoyed on ***Next Men*** wasn't there for ***DU***, and when the third issue came in at less than an average issue of ***JBNM***, I knew the writing was on the wall.

Danger Unlimited was intended to be a more "accessible" book—lower cover price, no "Mature Readers" warning on the cover—to hopefully sell *more* than ***JBNM***. But with a smaller royalty pool generated by that lower cover price, it is financially impossible to continue ***DU*** at the present time. (Among other things, I have to pay Kieron, Gary, and Matt out of my share of the loot, you see, so a smaller pool is made smaller still.)

What's sad in all this is that ***Danger Unlimited*** has sold out in every shop with which I've been in touch—those low orders meant a limited supply—but sold out too late for anything to be done about reorders. With the three- or four-month lead time required between orders and sales, a book has to fly right from the start or its creator will need deeper pockets than mine to maintain it. (I'm not nearly so rich as some folks think I am, after all.)

So... Farewell and adieu to ***Danger Unlimited***. Perhaps, in some more forgiving marketplace of the unforeseeable future, we will return to the adventures of the Carson Clan et al. In the meantime, I have lots of other irons pointed toward the fire. In a couple of months, in the space that would have been occupied by ***DU*** #5, you'll be introduced to ***Babe***, something perhaps more in line with what the expectations of the audience I've developed with ***JBNM***. Beyond that, other notions. But for now, a "wait and see" attitude prevails. Since I'm determined to sell these books on the basis of good, solid art and stories, without bells and whistles, without massive marketing campaigns, I must bide awhile and hope a marketplace tolerant of such retro-thinking will emerge from the ruins.

For your four issues of support, much thanks. As they say, see you in the funny papers...

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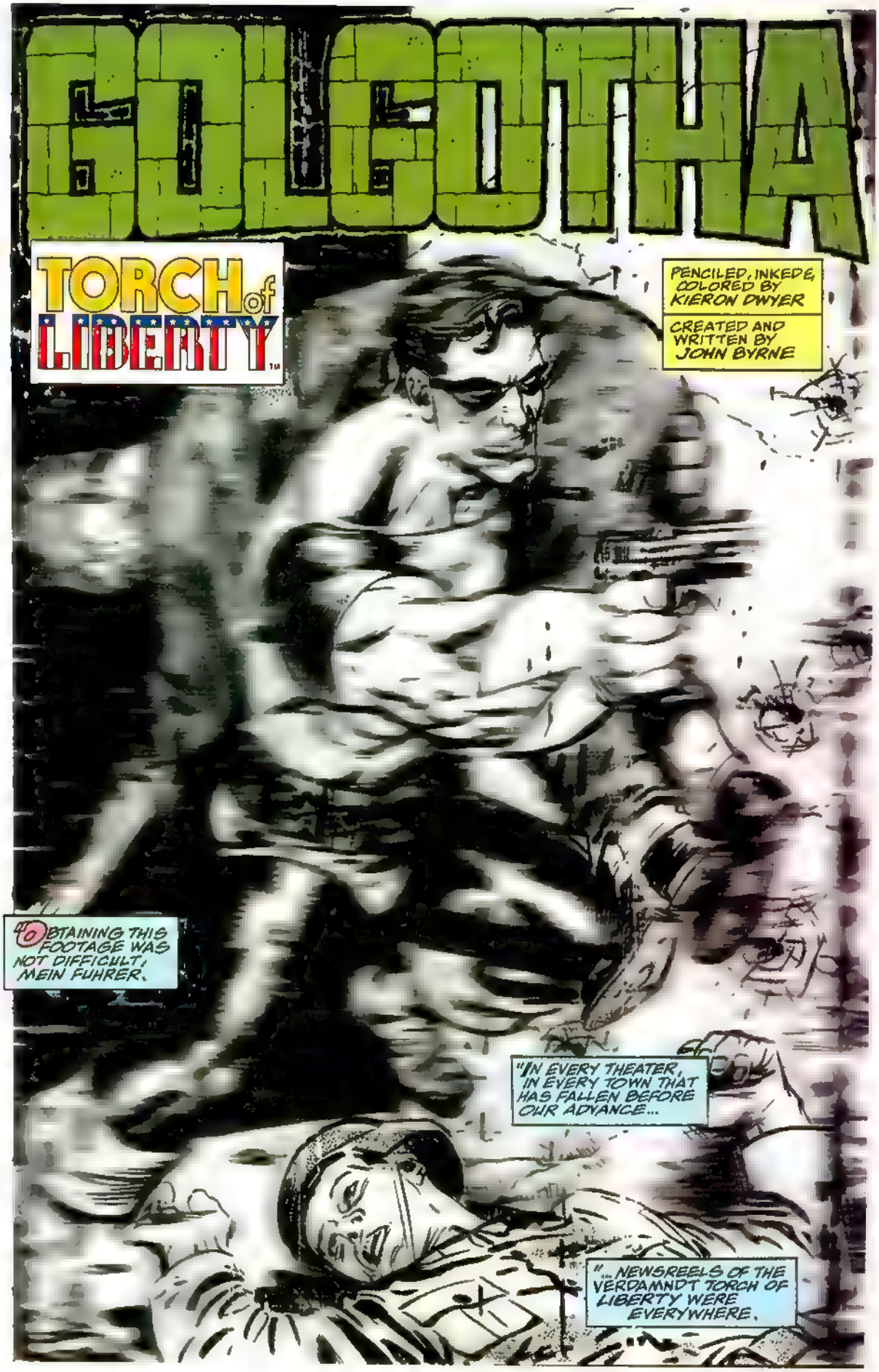
Plug: If you're interested in obtaining original art by John Byrne (including Gary Cody's paintings) please contact Jim Warden at:

D.O.A., PO Box 413, Cheltenham, MD 20623,
or
(301) 782 - 4052 between 7 and 11 pm Eastern.


GOLGOTHA
TORCH of LIBERTY™
PENCILED, INKED, COLORED BY KIERON DWYER
CREATED AND WRITTEN BY JOHN BYRNE
"OBTAINING THIS FOOTAGE WAS NOT DIFFICULT, MEIN FUHRER.
"IN EVERY THEATER, IN EVERY TOWN THAT HAS FALLEN BEFORE OUR ADVANCE...
"...NEWSREELS OF THE VERDAMNDT TORCH OF LIBERTY WERE EVERYWHERE.

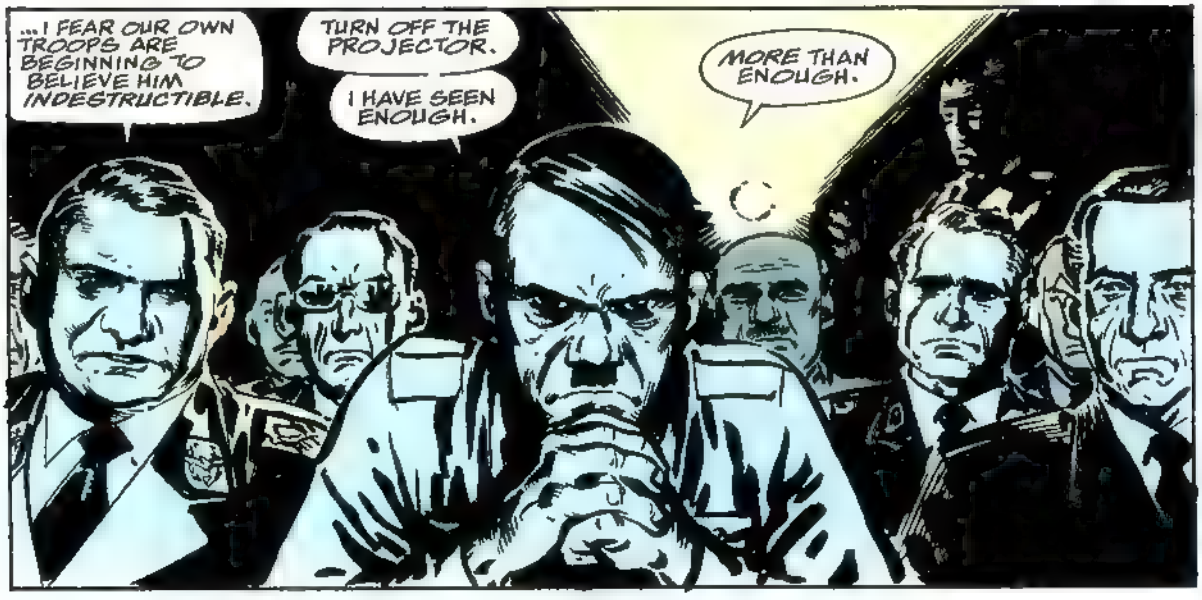
"WE HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO DISCOVER THE IDENTITY OF THE MAN BEHIND THE MASK...

"...BUT THIS WE DO KNOW...

"...HE HAS CAUSED AS MUCH DAMAGE TO OUR CAUSE AS A BATTALION OF ALLIED TROOPS.

"THERE IS NO PORTION OF THE EUROPEAN THEATER OF WAR IN WHICH HE HAS NOT MADE HIS PRESENCE KNOWN.

"AND ALTHOUGH THERE IS NOTHING TRULY TO INDICATE HE IS ANYTHING MORE THAN A MAN...


...I FEAR OUR OWN TROOPS ARE BEGINNING TO BELIEVE HIM INDESTRUCTIBLE.
TURN OFF THE PROJECTOR.
I HAVE SEEN ENOUGH.
MORE THAN ENOUGH.

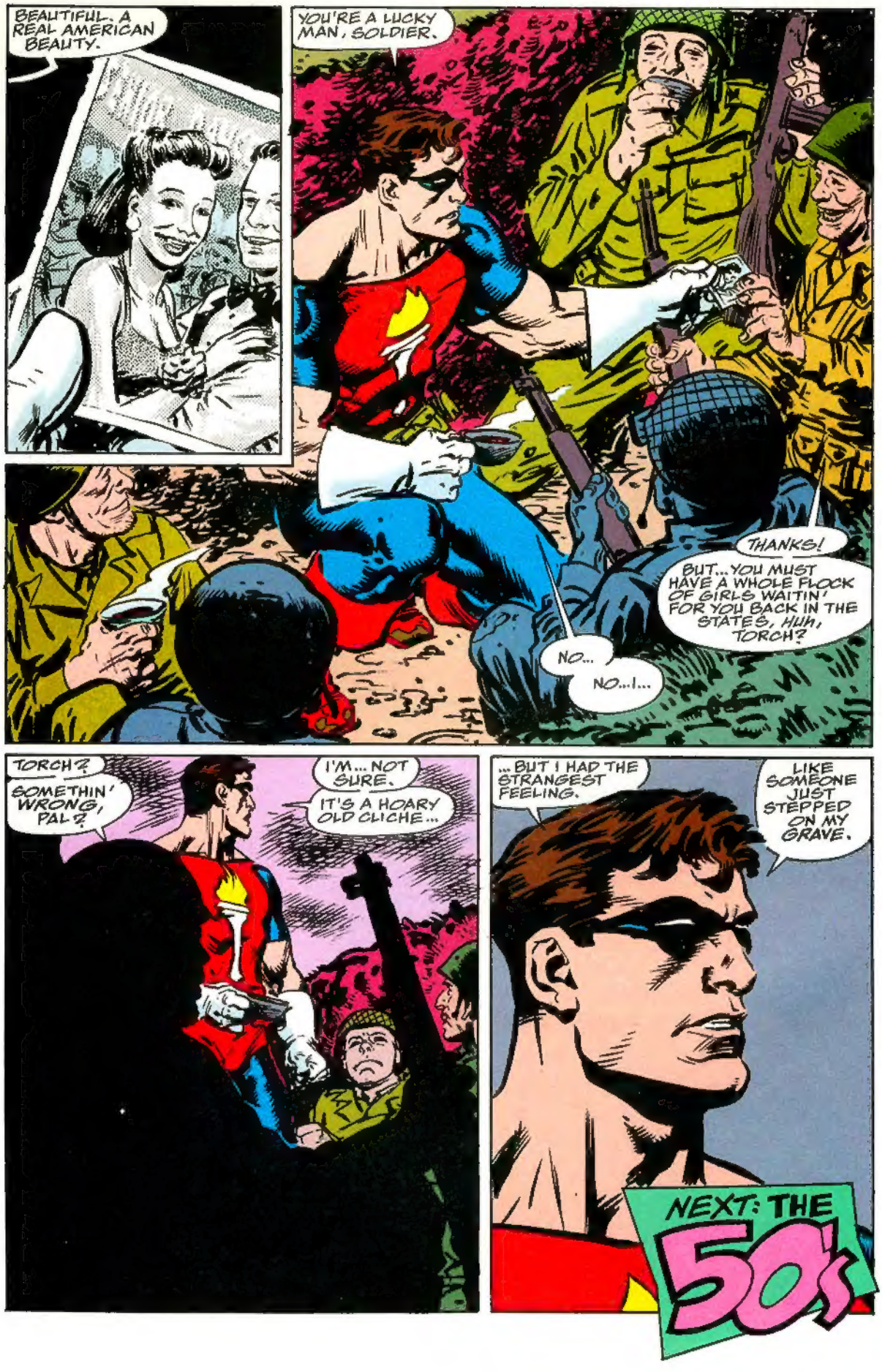
WE... REGRET HAVING TO SHOW YOU THIS, FUHRER...
...BUT YOU DID SAY YOU WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT THIS MAN...
MAN, YES!
INSTEAD YOU SHOW ME A SUPERMAN AND SPIN FAIRYTALES.
WHERE IS THE REST OF YOUR REPORT?
WHAT HAVE YOU DONE ABOUT DESTROYING HIM??

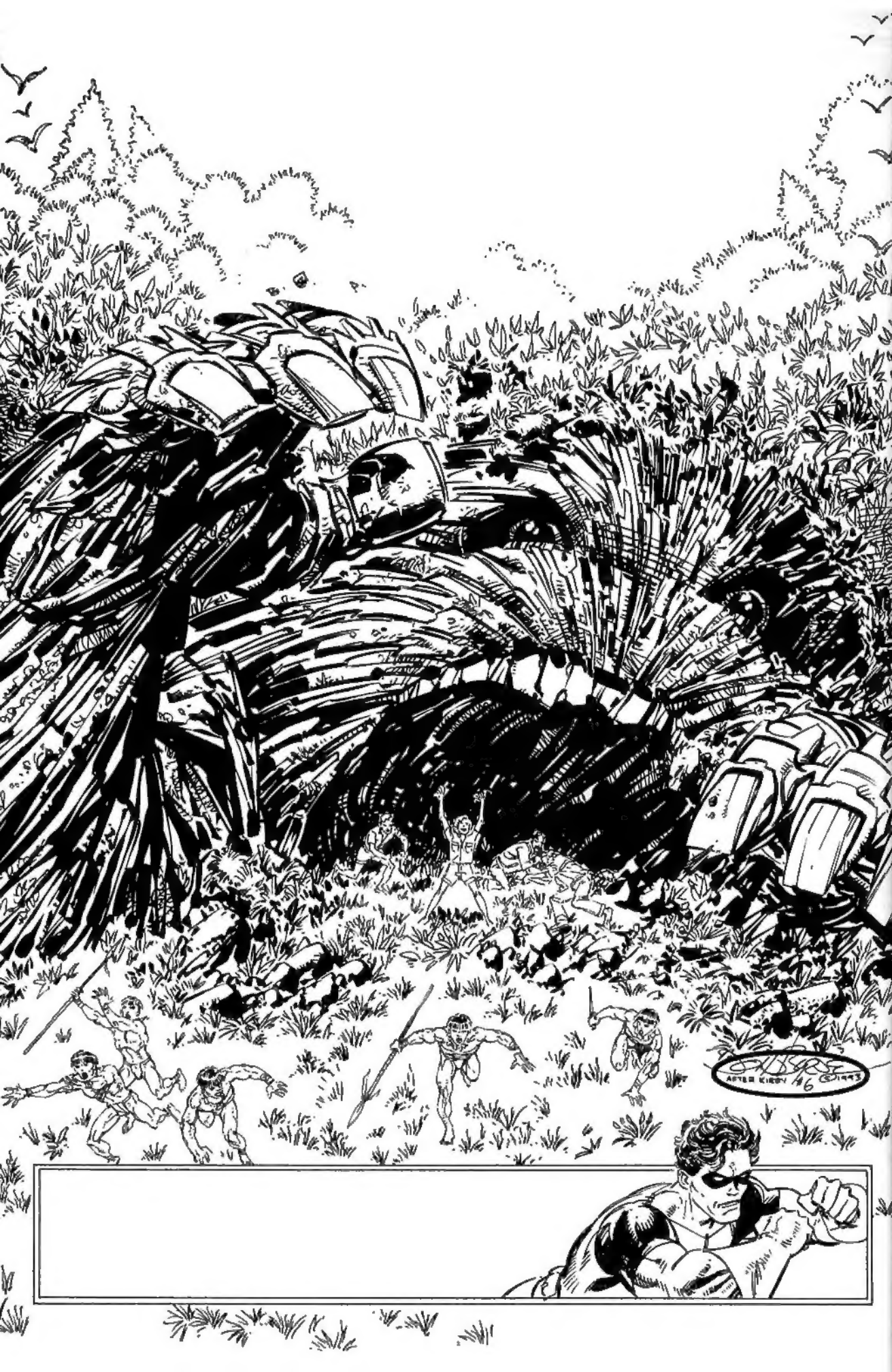
SEVERAL TIMES WE BELIEVED WE HAD BEEN SUCCESSFUL IN DOING JUST THAT, SIR... BUT EACH TIME THE TORCH OF LIBERTY CAME BACK, BOLDER AND STRONGER THAN EVER.
IS IT POSSIBLE??

COULD IT BE THAT THIS "TORCH" IS NOT A SINGLE MAN?
YOU SAID HE HAS FOUGHT IN EVERY CORNER OF EUROPE... PERHAPS...
NO, MEIN FUHRER.

DO NOT SEEK SOLACE IN EASY ANSWERS.
THE TORCH OF LIBERTY IS ONE MAN, ONE NEARLY INDESTRUCTIBLE WARRIOR.
"...NEARLY."

FOR EVERY ACTION, THERE IS AN EQUAL AND OPPOSITE REACTION.
FOR EVERY FORCE, A COUNTERFORCE.
I AM THE COUNTER-FORCE WHICH BALANCES THE TORCH OF LIBERTY.
GOLGOTHA!
WE HAD HOPED...
IF THERE WAS ANYONE IN THE THIRD REICH...
SPARE ME YOUR HOLLOW FLATTERY, GENERAL.
I HAVE BEEN SEEKING A PURPOSE SINCE MY CREATION.
NOW, I HAVE ONE.
YOU MAY OFFICIALLY CONSIDER THE TORCH OF LIBERTY A DEAD MAN.


BEAUTIFUL. A REAL AMERICAN BEAUTY.
YOU'RE A LUCKY MAN, SOLDIER.
THANKS!
BUT... YOU MUST HAVE A WHOLE FLOCK OF GIRLS WAITIN' FOR YOU BACK IN THE STATES, HUH, TORCH?
NO...
NO... I...
TORCH?
SOMETHIN' WRONG, PAL?
I'M... NOT SURE.
IT'S A HOARY OLD CLICHE...
... BUT I HAD THE STRANGEST FEELING.
LIKE SOMEONE JUST STEPPED ON MY GRAVE.
NEXT: THE 50's


AFTER KIRBY 46